

Propagating Classical Anti-Semitic Myths in Academia in the United States

Testimony by Marilyn Mayo, Associate Director of Fact Finding,
Anti-Defamation League

Submitted before the
First International Conference on Academic Anti-Semitism
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
February 23, 2006

Despite attempts by universities and, in particular, Jewish organizations to fight anti-Semitism on campuses across the United States through classes, seminars, and programs, certain anti-Semitic myths are still being propagated by professors who span the ideological spectrum from left to right. Today, most anti-Semitic rhetoric on campuses emanates from a left-wing anti-Zionist, anti-Israel perspective and is a relatively new phenomenon. However, there are some academics who still promote what one might call "classical" anti-Semitic myths. I will focus on several academics in the United States who propagate these anti-Semitic myths, examining how they disseminate their work, how their universities have dealt with them, and what can be done to counter their anti-Semitism. Even though these professors do not necessarily use the classroom as a forum to promote these anti-Semitic myths, they do use their academic credentials to validate their anti-Semitic theories.

The most prevalent of these anti-Semitic myths is the notion of a worldwide conspiracy by Jews to manipulate non-Jews and control world events for their own purposes. This myth is an overarching one that encompasses and incorporates other anti-Semitic myths and stereotypes, in particular that Jews control the United States government, media, and financial system; and that Jews' self-interest takes precedence over everything else, even to the detriment of the majority of the population. For example, many anti-Semites today assert that Jews in the Bush administration set the Iraq war in motion in order to protect Israel. To such conspiracy theorists, Jews are parasites and puppet-masters who manipulate entire nations and peoples for their own nefarious ends.

Kevin MacDonald: Jewish "traits" lead to power and manipulation

Today, some academic extremists try to provide legitimacy to the concepts behind, if not the authenticity of, classic anti-Semitic texts such as *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, a well-known forgery, and *The International Jew*, published originally by American industrialist Henry Ford in the 1920s. Kevin MacDonald, currently a tenured professor in the Department of Psychology at California State University at Long Beach, who describes himself as an "evolutionary psychologist," writes, "What strikes the reader of Henry Ford's *The International Jew*... is its portrayal of Jewish intensity and aggressiveness in asserting their interests. As [*The International Jew*] notes, from Biblical times Jews have endeavored to enslave and dominate other peoples."

MacDonald has published three books outlining his theories of Jewish “evolutionary” survival strategies, and has published a number of articles, including a three-part series in a racist journal, *The Occidental Quarterly*, in November 2004, under the title “Understanding Jewish Influence.” In the first essay in this series, MacDonald states that Jewish populations have always had enormous effects on the societies in which they reside because of several qualities that are central to Judaism as a “group evolutionary strategy.” These traits, he asserts, are ethnocentrism, intelligence and wealth, psychological intensity, and aggressiveness. He adds that these traits have helped Jews “influence the academic world and the world of mainstream and elite media, thus amplifying Jewish effectiveness compared with traditional societies,” and the result has been that “Jews have repeatedly become an elite and powerful group in societies in which they reside in sufficient numbers.”

MacDonald consistently points to one alleged example of how Jews in the United States have used their influence. He claims that Jews were behind the post-1965 cultural and ethnic revolution in the United States, and are responsible for “the encouragement of massive non-white immigration to countries of European origins.” Thus, MacDonald asserts that Jews are an elite group who not only control the media and academia, but have made one of their goals the debasement of white European culture. In his second essay, which deals with Zionism, MacDonald states that “in the contemporary world, the most important example of Jewish ethnocentrism and extremism is Zionism.” He claims that the creation of Israel and Jews’ desire to protect the Jewish state is “an example of the trajectory of Jewish radicalism. “

In his last essay in the series, “Neoconservatism as a Jewish Movement,” MacDonald expands on his theme of Jewish aggressiveness and ethnocentrism to say that these traits are most prevalent in the neoconservative movement. “Neoconservatism,” writes MacDonald, “is better described in general as a complex interlocking professional and family network centered around Jewish publicists and organizers flexibly deployed to recruit the sympathies of both Jews and non-Jews in harnessing the wealth and power of the United States in the service of Israel.” MacDonald adds that the neoconservatives “form an elite that is deeply involved in deception, manipulation and espionage on issues related to Israel and the war in Iraq.” He continues, “Given this state of affairs, one can easily see how Jews, despite being a tiny minority of the U.S. population, have been able to transform the country to serve their interests. It’s a story that has been played out many times in Western history, but the possible effects now seem enormous, not only for Europeans but literally for everyone on the planet, as Israel and its hegemonic ally restructure the politics of the world.” Thus, asserts MacDonald, Jews in the United States and Israel repeatedly use their power to manipulate and control the world.

Tony Martin: Jewish manipulation has hampered African-American progress

Using MacDonald's same basic arguments, but from a very different perspective, is Tony Martin, currently a tenured professor in the Africana Studies Department at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. In the early 1990s, Martin used as a textbook a work published by the anti-Semitic Nation of Islam called *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, which claims that Jews controlled the transatlantic slave trade and thus were disproportionately responsible for African slavery in the New World. When he was roundly criticized for using the controversial and discredited book, Martin published a response in 1993 called *The Jewish Onslaught*, which charged Jews with a conspiracy to control African-American economic interests and culture in the United States. Just as Kevin MacDonald claimed Jews were destroying white European culture in the United States, Martin claimed that Jews were doing the same to African-American culture.

In *The Jewish Onslaught*, Martin writes, "For the last three decades of Jewish assaults on Black progress, that jugular has usually meant the economic livelihood of the Black people." Like MacDonald, Martin claims that the Jews control the media in the United States, to the detriment of non-Jews. He writes, "For those who can manipulate the commanding heights of the mass media in such ways, free speech is obviously freer than for those with restricted or no access."

Martin also accuses Jewish Talmudic scholars of creating the Hamatic Myth, the myth that associates Africans with the supposed curse of slavery that Noah imposed on his son "over a thousand years before the transatlantic slave trade began." Martin claims that "as important as may have been the Jewish involvement in helping finance and prosecute the Atlantic slave trade...their invention of the Hamatic Myth may be of even greater importance, since it provided the moral pretext upon which the entire trade grew and flourished." Turning the Holocaust on its head, Martin asserts that it is now "the turn of Jews to retract, apologize and pay reparations for their invention of the Hamitic Myth, which killed many millions more than all the anti-Jewish pogroms and holocausts in Europe."

Martin concludes that Jewish domination over African-Americans has been the main cause of the destruction of African-American progress. As to the reason why, Martin alleges that perhaps Jews "concluded that a prostrate African American population, to be oppressed or paternalized as the times warrant, will continue to be its insurance against a Euro-American reversion to European anti-Jewish activity... For a self-reliant, independently thinking, politically and economically powerful African American entity would deprive the Jewish leadership of the perceived basis for the maintenance of their comfort level within the Euro-American structure."

Arthur Butz—Painting the Holocaust as another Jewish conspiracy

Academics have not simply perverted evolutionary theory and African-American history for anti-Semitic purposes; some have taken aim at the Holocaust itself. One of the key figures in the Holocaust denial movement, which uses pseudo-history to deny the central event in Jewish history in the twentieth century, is Arthur Butz, an associate professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University in Chicago. His 1976 book, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, was one of the first major works of Holocaust denial in the English language and is a key work for Holocaust deniers today. Butz also wrote numerous articles for the now-defunct *Journal of Historical Review*, a pseudo-academic Holocaust denial journal whose editorial board Butz served on from 1980 through 2001. Although Butz's field of study has nothing to do with history, fellow deniers cite his academic credentials in an attempt to cast his denial writings as respectable works of scholarship.

Butz uses the trappings of scholarly research to assert that the gas chambers at concentration camps such as Auschwitz never existed and that the deliberate extermination of European Jews never took place. In one article, for example, Butz claims that wartime records from Germany, Jewish organizations, Allied governments, the Vatican, the International Red Cross, and the German resistance give no indication that any extermination of the Jews occurred.

What happened to the millions of Jews who disappeared from Europe? For Butz, the answer is clear—they left Europe for the Middle East and America and other destinations. They did not die but merely relocated. Butz writes, "Posterity will see this 'Holocaust,' this curious imposture that enthralled us for two or three decades, as a transient phenomenon involving what will appear to be utterly audacious distortions of the historical record." In referring to the destruction of European Jewry, Butz says that the "allegation fails every relevant historical test, and entails a level of audacity or 'chutzpah' that would have staggered the imagination before the war." In other words, according to Butz, the Jews have been powerful enough to dupe that whole world even though there is not one shred of evidence that the Holocaust occurred.

Why do Holocaust deniers want the world to believe the Holocaust never occurred? At its core, Holocaust denial is anti-Semitic. It is the latest version of the Jewish conspiracy to manipulate the world. Deniers seek not only to delegitimize the Holocaust, but to debunk the efforts made over the last 60 years to fight anti-Semitism after the world saw the horrors that anti-Semitism could foster. Holocaust deniers do not simply use the trappings of academia; they also seek to exploit the university as a venue for promoting their theories. The Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust, for example, is a tiny organization that attempts to place Holocaust denial advertisements in college newspapers across the United States. Most recently, in early 2006, the Committee tried to place an ad in the University of Miami student newspaper with the headline, "Academic freedom? It is either there for all of us, or it's not there." These ads clearly try to present the denial of the Holocaust in the context of open academic debate.

Of course, the Holocaust is not open for debate any more than the existence of slavery in the United States prior to the Civil War would be. Many student newspapers, out of an unthinking regard for freedom of expression, have actually printed such advertisements, usually to their eventual regret.

Impact of the three professors' work

The material cited provides a few examples of classical anti-Semitic myths promoted by academics currently employed at U.S. universities. All three professors—MacDonald, Martin, and Butz--have been mired in controversy and at present do not teach their anti-Semitic theories in the classroom. They disseminate their work in other ways. Besides published books and articles, their works can be found on the Internet, a handy way to bypass academic review. White supremacists and neo-Nazis often refer to Kevin MacDonald and Arthur Butz's books and articles to validate their anti-Semitic ideology. And when controversy raged around Tony Martin, he was embraced by black nationalists who were quick to attribute many of the black community's ills to Jewish manipulation.

All three professors have found a comfortable home in particular among Holocaust deniers. Arthur Butz and Tony Martin have spoken at Holocaust denial conferences. In February 2006, Butz lauded the Iranian president's plans for an upcoming Holocaust denial conference in Iran. MacDonald testified on behalf of Holocaust denier David Irving in his lawsuit against Professor Deborah Lipstadt in Great Britain in 2000. Tony Martin appeared as a witness on behalf of Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel at a hearing in 2000 before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Universities and academic freedom

How do universities in the United States deal with academics in their ranks who promote anti-Semitic theories? American universities, public and private, encourage academic or intellectual freedom of expression. Tenured professors are free to write and say what they want without fear of repercussion. Universities frequently make a distinction between what is taught in the classroom and what goes on outside. If anti-Semitic material is not taught in the classroom and does not create what is called a "hostile environment," no action is taken against the professors. A free and open exchange of ideas is expected in the university environment. If professors are given the leeway to write articles and books, then it is considered a "breach of contract" to forbid them to publish whatever they want or to punish them for doing so. There are no laws in the U.S. where charges can be brought against a professor for promoting hate. In some cases, the professor is even given leeway to use the resources of the university to disseminate his anti-Semitic ideas. For example, Arthur Butz is free to use his university's Internet server to promote his Holocaust denial theories, as long as he makes it clear that these are his ideas, and not the views of the university. However, this does

not mean that a university cannot or should not speak out against morally repugnant ideas promoted by its faculty. In fact, in February 2006, the president of Northwestern University said that Butz's recent comments agreeing with the Iranian president's denial of the Holocaust "are a contemptible insult to all decent and feeling people," as well as "an embarrassment to the university."

First Amendment provides protection

In some way, universities are modeling First Amendment rights—the professors have a right to say what they want without interference by university officials. The First Amendment actually directly applies only to state and city-run universities; the government agencies that run these universities cannot interfere with professors' freedom of speech. The professors cannot lose their position based on what they say or write. In 1991, City College of New York professor Leonard Jeffries was condemned by university officials after making anti-Semitic remarks outside of the classroom. They then voted to give Jeffries a one-year extension as chairman of the Black Studies Department rather than the standard three years. However, a few months later, Jeffries was replaced as head of the department. Jeffries challenged the decision in federal court, claiming that the university violated his freedom of speech by penalizing him for his statements. In 1993 the jury sided with Jeffries and he was awarded nearly \$400,000 in damages and reinstated as department chairman. The University appealed the decision and in April 1995, the appeals court upheld Jeffries' dismissal as department head.

Private universities, however, set their own policies and rules. If a professor has a temporary, non-tenured position at a university, it is much easier for a university to dismiss the professor. For example, in 2005, a professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey who openly emerged as a neo-Nazi was quickly fired by that university.

Steps to fight academic anti-Semitism

What can be done about professors who promote anti-Semitism in the United States while still respecting academic freedom of expression? The primary recourse available is to use that same freedom of expression to expose the professors' work through articles and venues both on and off campus. For example, the Anti-Defamation League publishes reports that challenge the biased conclusions of anti-Semites and has sponsored forums in which their assertions can be combated. Universities, too, can help ensure that the expressions of anti-Semites do not go unanswered or unchallenged. Complementing such strategies is the fact that people in the United States, in particular, tend to view fighting anti-Semitism itself as an educational task. Additionally, it is important that people in academic settings understand where academic freedom of expression starts and stops. For example, university newspaper editors are under no legal or ethical obligation to accept paid advertisements from external extremist organizations.

Academic anti-Semitism, like other forms of anti-Semitism, is founded on myths, stereotypes and distortions. When left unchallenged, it may grow, but it is far harder to

do so in a university environment that is aware, sensitive, and responsive. This environment is what the Anti-Defamation League seeks to help create through our publications and campus programs; it is important that other bodies and organizations adopt similar measures.